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## WILL-MAKING.

THE right of testamentary alienation in its present ample extent was unknown to English law until a very late period. The feudal system, as is well known, stood long in opposition to any alienation whatever of land, except by descent. The right which an Englishman now possesses to dispose of his landed property by sale or gift, has been the result of centuries of struggle against the most unyielding opposition, and after all, owes its origin mainly to the guileful devices of crafty lawyers, who, in many notable instances, proved the earliest supporters of popular rights, by their ingenious discoveries in tyrannical statutes of that inevitable breach, existent, as is alleged, in all acts of parliament, through which metaphorical coaches and horses may be driven. By one of their happy inventions (the doctrine of uses), a freeman in the reign of Henry VIII. could, in an illicit way, devise his freehold lands; and seeing this to be the case, a parliament of that reign, with a bad grace, partly endorsed the custom, by a statute recognising testamentary dispositions of lands of socage tenure—a species of ancient freehold of comparative rarity. To this limit dispositions by will of real property were confined till after Charles II.'s restoration, when feudal tenures were abolished, and all freehold land was converted into socage tenure; but the same reign produced a statute, only lately repealed, which necessitated important formalities in the execution of a will. These requirements, together with a mass of ingenuously entangled *leges non scriptæ*, referring to the subject of will-making, made it an interesting speculation, till the year 1831, whether any of that large majority of Englishmen who prefer to make their own wills, unaided by legal advice (and who are known in the courts of law by the contemptuous designation of 'illiterate testators'), could, by any possibility, effect their intentions as to the disposal of their property after death.

Seeing by ages of experience that the stubborn inhabitants of Great Britain, in the face of the libraries of law reports which have been formed

from debate over their illiterate wills, still declined any interference of lawyers in the important finality of putting their house in order, parliament some years ago considerably perpetrated two comprehensive acts, which in future are to assist all the lame dogs over the testamentary hedge; and provided the independent Briton will in time to come consent to affix his signature to his will in the presence of two witnesses, he may riot in the expression of any nonsense suggested to his illiterate mind, with the assurance of a very liberal construction being used when it comes to be judicially considered. This desirable consummation was arrived at chiefly by the enactment that all the honoured words which previously had significant legal meanings should be reduced to the ranks of common conversation, and lose their charming distinction; and further, that in the perusal of an 'illiterate' will thereafter, the law should regard indifferently what the testator had actually written, but, with a merciful consideration for his want of legal comprehension, should studiously attempt to discover what he intended to write, and decree accordingly. It will be perceived, therefore, that 'a freehold messuage or tenement with the appurtenances' may now be effectually disposed of, under the description of a 'Villa,' a 'Hermitage,' a 'Retreat,' a 'Rookery,' or any other affectionate designation that its owner may choose to distinguish it whereby; while the hereditary schoolmaster, who for many generations past has been persistently using the solemn word 'heirs,' in the contented anticipation that it would be held more distinctly to confer a life estate on the party with whose name it is associated, and invariably leaving it out at the point on which the whole of an important devise legally rested, is now likely to find his vagaries tenderly considered.

As to the exact place where the testator is to sign his name, it is only necessary to add that none but the most ingeniously eccentric can now err, for a special act of parliament contains a very long list of all the improbable places where a signature of the most perverse or most benighted testator can by any possibility be found—the beginning,

the middle, the margin, the back, and everywhere else but the orthodox position ; each one of these amusing singularities being now solemnly validated.

Feudal notions seem to have fettered, in early times, the disposition by will of movables even, though, as may be expected, this inconvenience was not of very lengthy duration. However, it is stated in *Fabian's Chronicle*, that 'in the 17th yere of King Henry the second, this was ordeyned, that everye man shold mak his last Will in presaunce of his neigboures, or, at least, cause it to be read in ther presaunce—first, he shold recon what he owed, and to sett so much of his goods : and if he had a Wyf and Childrenne, then the residue of his goods, his debts being payd, to be devide in 3 partes, one to the Wyfe, one to the Childrenne, and the third to be spent for the wele of his soule. If he had no Childrenne, then the halfe to his soule. If no Wyfe nor Childrenne, then to dispose of his goods at pleasure.'

Although these restrictions were not durable, the custom obtained, and is apparent in all ancient wills, of signing the will in the presence of numerous witnesses ; and it is perhaps owing to this necessitated publicity that wills were formerly made only on the hastening approach of death—a fact generally evidenced by the short time elapsing between the date of the will and its probate.

At a time when the disposing power of a testator was limited, at least as to his landed property, it might be supposed that wills were not frequently made ; but this would be erroneous. Though land was most commonly disposed of by settlements made in lifetime, yet it was a very general custom of all classes in independent circumstances to make a will, specifically bequeathing articles of furniture, wearing apparel, or jewellery, or particular farming stock, and making small pecuniary bequests to the poor, or for religious or charitable purposes. Moreover, a will was by no means an unimportant confession of faith, and generally contained minute directions as to the testator's burial. Many of these wills were of course not actually proved, but the great number that were verified in this way are all distinguished by these characteristics. The fact that two or three centuries ago the same antipathy to the interference of lawyers in the preparation of a will seems to have prevailed, is the cause of many documents, of which probate has been duly granted, containing much matter that is quaintly original and interesting.

The absence of the legal functionary is easily detected then, as now, from the irrelevant matter with which the testament is augmented ; from the gushing fervour of the religious sentiments (formerly forming the first clauses of a will, generally coldly formal in the legally accurate will, and now invariably abandoned) ; by the intricate verbosity of bequests—as tokens of gratitude, or affection ; by the unbusiness-like introduction of paternal advice, or friendly wishes, or the reference to ranking enmities ; and the pious reiterations of the hope of resurrection.

Here is an instance, from an old will, of those cases where, through the pressure of approaching death, or intentionally, the man of law was not assisting in the preparation of a will, leaving, consequently, an opportunity for the exhibition of the ruling passion strong in death.

Sir Robert Bevill, of Chesterton, Hunts, who

died at the age of sixty-two years, was the representative of a very old family, and a courtier in James I.'s reign. The old knight, three weeks before his death in 1635, signed and published, in the presence of three witnesses, a will, afterwards proved, wherein he first bequeathes his soul, in the then customary fashion, into the hands of his Maker, 'stedefastlie believeing, in and bye the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to obtayne fre pardon and forgiveness of al my sinnes, and at the last day to have and receive a glorious resurrection.' Then, immediately reverting to the things of corruption, he says : 'Item I give and bequeath to Sir John Hewett Baronet' [his son-in-law] 'Tenn Shillings, and noe more, in respect he stroake and causelessly fought with me ;' and having arranged this satirical memento, he proceeds in the same vein : 'Item I give unto my wife tenn shillings, in respect she tooke her sonnes part agaynst me, and did anymote and comfort him afterwards. These will not be forgotten.' The testator reserves yet another mark of the memory of his wrong, by following with a bequest to some now undistinguished Katherine Byng, of 'all such monies as is due unto mee by Sir John Hewett' [the bellicose son-in-law], 'by virtue of an order or Decree in the Chancery.' (Was this to keep the feud alive ?) He then bequeaths all the residue of his large estates to his second son ; and having in these ways finally confirmed, to the best of his ability, the family dissensions, he contentedly concludes his embittered testament by an exposure of his wife's desertion, as further apologetic of an ample provision for her not being made, 'she having taken all her own goods into her own possession, and disposed of them at her pleasure.'

Let us leave this retributive testator, grimly satisfied with his brief arrangement of worldly affairs, and in his happy confidences of the future, to consider the confessions of another unfortunate individual, who selected similar successful means of permanently recording his desertion and misery. Mr Gervase Holles saw the probate copy of this will 'upon record in the Prerogative Office, in a great vellum book entitled Wingfield,' and thought it worthy of a note among his other manuscript collections. The testator's name is 'William Pime, (or Pym), and he is described as of Woolavington, in the county of Somerset, gentleman. His will is dated 10 January 1608, and is to this effect : 'Item I give and bequeath to ye Church at Wells xiiid. Item I give to Agnes (that I did a long time take for my wyfe till of late shee hath denyd mee to bee her husband although wee were marryd wth. my friends consent her father mother and uncle at it and now shee swereth shee will nevyr love mee neither bee perswaded by preachers nor by any other web. hath happen'd within this few yeres And Toby Andrews the beginner wch. I did see wth. mine own eyes when he did more than was fitting and this by the means of Robert Musgrave and theirre abettors I have lived a miserable life this 6 or 7 yeres and now I leve the revenge to God) ten pounds to buy her a gret horse for I could not this manny yeres please her with one gret enough.'

This gloomy joke of the unhappy Pime was put on perpetual record on the 20th September 1610, by the oaths of the two executors, who obtained the grant of probate, swearing faithfully to administer according to their testator's directions.

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There is evidence in many unprofessional wills of fears of the testators lest any untoward neglect on their part should give birth to *post-mortem* litigation; and the way in which these fears are expressed, and the attempts to provide against any possibility of the calamity of lawyers' quarrels, are very various, and sometimes amusing.

One testator, in Queen Elizabeth's time, wishes that 'if thro' lack of knowldg or through haste he has deale streghleye in any way, that that point be reformed.' Another, in the same reign, in very quaint expressions, directs, as is frequently the case with some testators even now-a-days, that all disputes arising out of her will are to be settled by her executors; and that, if their decision is not accepted, the disputant is to take no interest under the will. The first of these directions, in the eye of the law, was, and is now of course meaningless; the second is ingeniously provocative of litigation, about a very clearly expressed will, and never was, or ever could with propriety be accepted by any legal jurisdiction. But here is a more energetic elusion of a similar nature, which apparently has been successfully effectual, for though some of the charitable trusts created by it are even yet in existence, there remains no record of any litigious dispute relating to their administration.

Alderman William Gee, of Kingston-upon-Hull, a wealthy merchant, and the founder of a Yorkshire family of importance, made a very characteristic will in the year 1600, which was duly proved, and which commences with these words: 'Wheras in the Scriptures the gret God of Heaven and earthe has willed by the prophet to saye to Hezekias to mak his Will and put things in order for that he must die so I doe now pray and humbly beseech the gret and myghtie God to confounde and destroye al those menn lawyers and others whosoever to the devel to dwel yn the pit of Hell who doe or shal doe or tak upon them to alter ys my Will Amen good Lord Amen in the name of God the fayther Almyghtie Maker of Heaven and Earthe the se and al that therein is Amen I William Gee; &c.

Mr Gee died in 1603, and a very fortunate time it must have been for his neighbours and townspeople, notwithstanding their grief at his departure, for the money which he directs to be distributed at his death to the poor, to the town, and all its charities, is unusually liberal in amount; even the mere fact of dwelling in the same street with him, he makes a reason for a small legacy, thus: 'Item I doe give amongo my neybors in ye same streeete wher I doe dwel in moyene to mak merrye withall Ls. 13. 4. and soe to give thanks to my good God.'

The following is a specimen of a Yorkshire peasant's will, proved about the same date, singular for its rustic abruptness:

'I William Thorp of Aldborough soul into the hands of Almighty God my Maker and Redeemer to poor man's Box 12s.—to sonne Robert the lease of my house one stagess and one corn wayne and the wood that come home this year and also my couple of oxen—to Alison my dau'r 2 black kye—to dau'r Anna's and Elizabeth 3 kye *between them*—to Anthony Robinson a Stott of 4 years old and a met of beans and to his children a met of ditto—son Robert and 3 daur's all executors.'

A glance into the very characteristic will of one Richard Coney, who was a Merchant of the Staple,

in the reigns of Queen Mary and Elizabeth, gives us an interesting notion of the intimacies of life at that period. Coney lived near Boston, in Lincolnshire, while it was yet port of great importance, and was the son of a very wealthy merchant residing there, and describing himself also as of Calais; and it was no doubt owing to the taking of that place in 1558, that the disasters to which the will refers were chiefly attributable.

After elaborately expressing his religious faith, and directing his burial to take place at Morton, he proceeds, with the careful minuteness of a man of business, giving, in his directions, a very good notion of what a sale by auction was in the Tudor times: 'Item I will that xx<sup>d</sup>. be deale amongst the ringers in Morton and the dynner to be made in my farmhouse in Morton whereto be provided meat and drincke frome Burne needfull and necessarie for such as shalbe there. And ymmediately after I will that straighteway and as sone as I ame depted there be good and perfecte Inventorie made and taken of all my househould stufse and ympleaments of householde within and withoute my houise in pticulers euye thinge of yt selfe alsoe may Inventorie bee made of al my corne and cattell and of euerie thinge and things that onto mee anye waye belongeth withoute anye praysemente mad them thereof Alsoe that what I owe as what I ame oweinge me maye be collected. And my Debts I wilbe paid to euerie man makeinge dewe proufe howe it is owinge hym in convenient tyme as order best maye be takenne—wt them my apparel alsoe I wilbe Inventories whereof at London I have in Jarrette Carrington's custodye a tailor a gowne wt a standinge collar welted with velvete as good as newe and I have lyeinge at the wynde mill in thoulde Jurie' [the Old Jewry] 'a Cloke called a Spanishe Cape faced wt pincked taffeta. And for as much as I perceaved ever that my lovinge Wife Elizabeth after my depteinge oute of this life will make noe tarryinge in Burne Therefore and alsoe for that throwe manye and sounderye grete losses wh I have had my state is very sore altered at this daye I will my goods be ordered in this manner and sorte—for my householde stufse and ympleaments of householde I wilbe ordered and repaired upto the beste and euerie thinge and things ells aboute houise to the uttermost usinge noe decepte. And I will there be proclamacon made at Burne Crosse that there wilbe sale made of suche things assigninge one daye in the weeke to sell yt and even as in Flanders they use there and nowe in London even so I would be that euerie thinge whatsoever I have or oughte anye way to have be soe and in that order sold in my woll folde houise called the guildehouse and if ther be none here in the Countreye that is experte or cunninge to use the hammer in that order and to be made sale in that order then I will that some honneste poore man in London that there have used to sell things in that order be hired to come downe and see here to sell them. And for all suche smalle ympleaments and things that may easelie thronen aboute I will they were bestowed in chests so as theye were not loste nor lackinge. And yt there be vi monethes daye geven upon sellinge to paye for those things that shalbe soulde puttinge in good and sufficiete sureties Provided that my wifes apparell either lynnen or wollen that is or shalbe fashioned or made for her at the howre of my deth be oute

of Inventorie allowinge her the faireste cheste in the howse to putte the same in' [Generous Coney!] 'And in this sale makeinge there be no decepte used. But that he or she who offereth or biddeth moste may have it as well in howsehold stuffe as in horse sheepe neete or anythinge that is mine my apparel in London or elle what shalbe founde mine in London to be eye this order sellēd my entente is easēy to be knowne that I woulde my goods were souldē to the moste So as my poore Estate and sustaunnce by euerie meanes collected and gaethered togoder maye appearē.'

There is, at Doctors' Commons, a fund of surprising interest, readily accessible, in the older registers of wills kept there, and, by the more curious, the originals themselves may be inspected; but the public are effectually debarred from any continued indulgence in an antiquarian amusement of this kind by the office regulations, which require the fee of one shilling to be paid for the perusal of each separate will, and if the luxury of an extract be sought for, a further fee of sixpence for every seventy-two words copied is demanded; so that, most probably, a selection of this really interesting matter, in any extensive way, will never reach publication, were the chances of success even such as to tempt the cupidity of speculators.

To those who are personally interested in the matter of will-making, we follow the best legal authorities in entreating them when making a will to avoid the use of any book of forms, however professedly easy or comprehensive, and to use only language dictated by the ordinary judgment and perspicacity of business. The most complete instructions as to making a safe will are contained in these few words: write your wishes as to the disposal of your property, briefly, in your own terms, on paper, and let it be signed by yourself and two witnesses, in each other's presence.

### A COUNTY FAMILY.

#### CHAPTER VI.—THE FAMILY PORTRAITS.

MR MOFFAT joined the family circle at dinner on the night of their arrival at the Manor. He had been the only link between Anthony and his old home—the only man who had given himself the trouble to communicate with the exile during his long banishment, and he now reaped the fruits of this in the cordial friendship of the new Squire. At the time of the latter's disgrace, Mowbray Moffat had been articled clerk to his uncle Robert, who had himself, in the character of family lawyer, made some effort to mollify Russell Blackburn's wrath against his eldest son; but when he found interference worse than useless, and also, at his client's direction, had drawn up the deed which seemed to put Anthony's succession to the estate beyond human probability, the elder Moffat had taken no further interest in him, and even cautioned his nephew against the manifestation of such a feeling. But Mowbray had written, though guardedly and cautiously enough, whenever any event of importance had taken place at the Manor; and even these measured phrases of good-will had been very grateful to their recipient. A little kindness goes a great way when we are poor; nay, the very remem-

brance of us (whom so many have forgotten) appears a kindness. Whether it was genuine pity or only prudent forethought that impelled the man of parchments thus to act, is doubtful. He certainly ran some risk with at least two of his employers—tyrant Russell and spendthrift Ferdinand—who had strictly commanded all relations with the Disgrace to the Family to cease; not, it must be confessed, by reason of Anthony's first offence alone, but from his subsequent conduct. The letters he wrote to his father were not of a conciliatory character; and that which, on the occasion of the old man's death, he addressed to his usurping successor, was really quite a curiosity in the way of vituperation. But in course of years, passionate indignation had given place to patient watching for retribution—hoarded hate. He ceased to rave of his own wrongs, or to make comments upon the proceedings of his detested kinsmen; but on the demise of each brother he had put in a written protest against the continuance of the injustice which their common father had perpetrated.

To these letters, Mr Moffat had been instructed, on the part of his clients, to make no reply; but he had always written, on his own account, to express a decent sorrow for Anthony's misfortune; that is, for his banishment, not for the trials which poverty imposed upon him, for of those he knew nothing for certain, whatever he may have guessed. Anthony's pride prevented him from making that disclosure by letter, which his passion, excited by the sight of his old home, had just compelled him so openly to proclaim. The lawyer perhaps had his own reasons for not inquiring too nearly into his correspondent's actual circumstances; however willing to offer sympathy, and even advice, he might have shrunk from advancing money out of his own pocket to supply Anthony's necessities—the security being so exceedingly problematical. Of course, he knew that his old friend—for they had been playmates together, or rather he had been the young Squire's humble companion, while the next brother, Ferdinand, was still in the nursery—was very poor; but the fact was not pressed upon his notice, and he was glad to ignore it. Perhaps, if he had known how poor the inmates of Moor Cottage had been—how small a sum would have seemed a fortune to them—he would have drawn his purse-strings readily enough. Of late, however, Mr Moffat might well have defended himself from the charge of want of charity, upon the ground of fearing to wound Anthony's feelings—for it was upon the question of Richard Blackburn's affording his uncle pecuniary assistance that the lawyer and his present client had well-nigh quarrelled; Mr Moffat had accompanied his employer's offer not only with an earnest entreaty that it should be accepted, but even with an encomium upon the young Squire's liberality and good-feeling; and this the resolute old quarryman had bitterly resented. Indeed, no communication had passed between them since that period, except the one letter that had apprised the old man of his nephew's death. Their meeting, therefore, at least upon one side, had had something of embarrassment; but the few earnest words of gratitude that accompanied the Squire's warm grip of salutation had at once put the lawyer at his ease.

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had gone on to say, 'and it is to you, to whom I have so long been indebted, that I must for the future look for aid of all kinds.'

If Mr Moffat had been aware of the company which his host had kept for so many years, he would certainly have marvelled to hear him use such well-chosen words; but he remembered Anthony as having had the pleasantest voice and the most winning address of all the Blackburns, who, to say the truth, had been (with one other exception) a rough lot, both in speech and feeling. He marvelled, therefore, not at Anthony's comparative culture (though there was much else in him to wonder at), but at the lack of it in Mrs Blackburn, which, indeed, throughout the repast was manifest enough. She partook of every dish, and every condiment which could be taken with them; she mixed her liquors in a really alarming manner; and in the intervals of the meal, she betook herself to balancing the silver forks upon her finger, with the relish of a person who partakes of an amusement for the first time. Moreover, though Mr Moffat was well acquainted with the local dialect, her talk was sometimes utterly unintelligible to him; the fact being, that the family, in their earlier days of poverty, had been migratory, and the consequence, in Mrs Blackburn's case, had been a combination of *patois*.

But the chief enigma of the little party to the astute man of business, very desirous of solving the three social problems before him, was Miss Ellen. Her features were not only well formed, but possessed that softened beauty which belongs in general to those who have been brought up delicately; who have experienced that hot-house training, the result of which is mistaken for that of aristocratic birth. Her hands were as white, if not quite so smooth, as those of any young lady in the county; and though her speech was more elaborate and stiff, the words were better selected.

The dinner conversation was not, however, general, but chiefly maintained by Mr Moffat and his host; the latter asking question after question respecting this man and that, whose face of fifty years ago had been familiar to him; and the latter, nine times out of ten, replying, with a shake of his white head: 'He is dead and gone, sir.'

And all this time the servants waited with wondering eyes, speculating upon their master's past, and endeavouring to forecast from it their own future. It was already evident to them that they would not, as some had expected, have everything their own way with him; yet he had only once spoken angrily, when he bade them let that day be the last on which he should see them in mourning apparel. Any reference, however undemonstrative, to his immediate predecessors at the Manor-house seemed intolerable to him. The dining-room was hung with full-length portraits of his father and brothers, and it was observed that an angry flush came over his face whenever his eye wandered towards them during the meal; but when it was over, and the ladies had withdrawn, and the obsequious butler was placing a bottle of rare port upon the table, with a few words of respectful encomium, he was arrested by the startling words from the Squire: 'Get a ladder, man, at once, and take all those pictures down.'

While host and guest were sipping their wine in silence, this accordingly was done; and some half-

dozen huge frames, with their contents, were soon standing in a line against the wall, like criminals awaiting execution. They had most of them fine handsome features, but of an animal type.

'That is my father, of course,' observed Anthony coldly, as he pointed to burly figure with puffed cheeks and sensual chin, who occupied the middle place. There was a twinkle in the eye that hinted of humour, or perhaps only of the pleasures of the flesh, but it was marred by an obliquity of vision which imparted malignancy; indeed, it was easy to imagine it becoming 'a damned disinheriting countenance,' if irritated by opposition, and such it unquestionably seemed to the present beholder. 'This' must have been taken after my time,' continued he, rising and confronting the canvas, as though it were a thing of life; 'yet I should know it anywhere. He was a hard man, except where his own vices were concerned, and then he was weak enough.—Was it not so, Mr Moffat?'

'Indeed, sir,' stammered the lawyer, straightening his stiff white cravat, 'I had no certain knowledge of the late Mr Russell Blackburn. My uncle Robert, as you were aware, was the family lawyer throughout almost all your father's life.'

'Ay, true,' replied Anthony, cynically; 'and of course you never heard his character discussed. With the rest of this goodly company, however, you had a closer acquaintance than myself.—Is that my brother Ferdinand?'

His finger pointed to the portrait of a man of five-and-twenty, attired in a jockey's dress, and about to mount a sleek and well-bred horse. His hand was on the reins, but his face was turned round to the spectators, as though giving some final order before he set out.

'Yes, sir, that is Squire Ferdinand; and very like. He is painted with his famous mare, that won so many steeple-chases. I recollect her well. She realised four thousand pounds in stakes in a single year, though, it is true, she cost her owner thrice the money in lost bets. He would back her against anything, and so would all about here.' The lawyer, ready enough to exchange the dangerous topic of humanity for that of horse-flesh, or, perhaps, since he had some turn for sport, being really interested in it, waxed eloquent upon his glossy theme. 'She was a genuine beauty; and though, as you see, she had one white stocking, which was thought a blemish, her owner would never allow she was not perfect. She had a stall and a paddock to herself; two grooms to wait upon her; and during one very severe season, the Squire had the straw-yard roofed in for her, so that she might take her exercise under cover. Let me see, which winter was it?'

'Perhaps it was that same winter,' broke in Anthony hoarsely, 'when we nearly lost our Ellen, because coal was too dear for us to buy. Yes, sir, we starved and shivered, while yonder scoundrel lavished gold—my gold—upon his pampered pet.'

'She broke his neck, for him, poor fellow, at last,' pleaded the lawyer softly, 'as I wrote to let you know.'

'Was the mare that did it?' ejaculated Anthony excitedly. 'Then I am sorry that I grudged her aught. I will have a statuette of silver cast of her, and underneath it written: "The Queen of Horses." Or stay; I'll have this rascal painted out, and the mare left; by Heaven, I will!' The vehemence of the old man's passion was even more

terrible to witness than to listen to : it seemed to go well nigh to choke him before it found vent in words ; and full a minute passed before he got the mastery over himself and it ; then turning to the neighbour-picture, he inquired contemptuously : ' Whose brat is that ? '

' That is young Ferdinand, sir, who died of the fever.'

' Humph !—And this is Charles the Sot, I suppose ?'

' It is your brother Charles, sir,' answered the lawyer quietly. ' If he was fond of the bottle, at least he had no weakness for the fair sex. There was not a woman-servant in the Manor, nor one admitted within the lodge-gates for the five years he ruled the place. A most eccentric personage.'

' An idiot, sir,' ejaculated Anthony, ' who would have drivelled out his days in some asylum, if delirium tremens had not cut them short.—This is the fisher-fellow, Richard, I suppose ?—And that his son, who died here this day fortnight, eh ? Now all these rogues shall burn together, at once.' And the old Squire reached out a trembling hand and grasped the bell-rope.

' I pray you consider, sir,' interposed Mr Moffat hastily. ' If you are so ill resolved, at least do nothing in such sudden heat. Although these folk were not your friends, still you were kin, and blood is thicker than water, or is, at all events, so held to be in these parts. Your neighbours here would resent such conduct deeply, they would indeed, sir.'

' The neighbours ?—You mean the flatterers, the lickspittles, all those who fawned on this precious brotherhood ! What care I whether they are pleased or displeased ?'

' For your own part, nothing, sir, doubtless. But for Miss Ellen's sake, you should wish to be on good terms with the country-side. To burn these portraits of the men they knew so well, would bring you into much discredit. Your kin are dead and gone to their account, and hate should not be pushed beyond the grave. Besides, there are some among them who have done you no evil turn, nor thought to do it. The boy Ferdinand here, for instance, who perhaps never heard your name ; and this young Richard—if you would but have believed it, sir—no better meaning and more generous lad ever drew breath. His people here adored him.'

' His people ! They were mine.'

' The people of the village, I mean, sir ; they did not know, remember—although *you* knew so well—but that they *were* his people ; nor did he himself. He understood nothing of the rights of the matter, nor your wrongs. Do you think his father yonder told him : " We usurp this place, which should be your uncle Anthony's ? "

' And why did not *you* tell him ? ' inquired the Squire, facing round upon his guest. ' You knew.'

' I did say much that moved him greatly, sir. You know yourself how instantly he acted upon it ; and although you spurned his offer, I still think—'

' Ah, I see,' interrupted Anthony ; ' you feared to tell the truth, else justice, reparation even, so far as he could make it, might have been done at last. You, then, are to blame, not he.—Among that nest of rogues, this Richard, then, was honest at the core. He has a comely face enough, now that I look into it, and a pleasant smile.'

' He has indeed, sir ; and if I were one given to compliment, I could tell you how old folks about here used to say they found young Squire Anthony reproduced in this same boy. Indeed, I have often seemed to sit beside you when I have sat with him at this very table. He had, like you, his mother's gentle nature, rather than his father's. He fell in love too, just as you did, when he was quite a boy.'

Squire Anthony had sat down in front of this likeness of his former self, and was regarding it attentively. He did not hear one half of what the lawyer said. The fifty years that lay between him and boyhood seemed all swept away, and he was once more a lad. What airy dreams he had then indulged in ! what rose-tinted visions of life had his fancy painted ! How passion had swayed him ! It was in that very room, whither, on the occasion of her taking her new place, his Mary had come to have a few words of advice from her mistress, that he had first seen his charmer in that house (he had only known her by sight as the acknowledged beauty of the hamlet, and his mother's favourite pupil in the village school, before). He even remembered where she stood, close by the window yonder, with her hands modestly folded ; and the pattern of the simple gown she wore, and the colour of the ribbons in her bonnet. It was a foolish enough thing to do, but he had fallen in love with the new waiting-maid as honestly as ever duke did with duchess. He had never meant otherwise than honourably towards her. And while it lasted, what a transport it had been ! He had not inherited the gross animal nature of his father ; but his affections were very strong, his heart was tender, his voice and air were winning. All the beauty and physical grace that had departed from him so long were seen once more in the portrait on which his eyes had been fixed. They were now cast down upon the shining table, on which quite another picture was mirrored—an aged, furrowed face, white hair, white beard, and eyes that gazed dimly forth from beneath white bushy brows.

' You are right, Moffat,' said he thoughtfully, and after a long pause : ' the pictures must not be burned, though I will not have them here. Let them be put away out of my sight, till I am dead and gone like the rest—all but young Richard's there : he shall have the place of honour above the mantelpiece. If the lad had lived, and taken a liking to his cousin Ellen— But there ; he had a sweetheart of his own, you told me.'

' Yes, sir ; Miss Lucy Waller ; a sweet girl, whose father until lately sat in the House for Moseley.'

' What a handsome pair they would have made !' mused the old squire, quite unconscious of the lawyer's reply. ' Both Blackburns too : I could have made a point of that.' Then suddenly : ' How do you think her looking, Moffat ? '

' Miss Ellen, sir ?'

' Of course ; who else ?'

' Indeed, sir, she is very beautiful, though, I should fear, somewhat delicate. She will cause many a heartache in the county with those large soft eyes of hers, doubtless ; since, I suppose, if it is not an impertinence to ask it, she is fancy free as yet ?'

' Yes, yes,' said Anthony hastily. ' She has formed no engagement : you have my leave to say that much. To see her married well, and

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happily, would make amends to me for much that I have suffered.—You hear her singing in the drawing-room even now. Yes, that is my Nelly's voice; and, as you say, as clear as any bird's.—If you have done your wine, sir, let us join the ladies.'

## CHAPTER VII.—BENEATH THE OLD ROOF-TREE.

The Manor-house was not without its memories for Mrs Blackburn as well as her husband, although they were of a different sort. She had dwelt as a servant where she was now the mistress: she had returned in triumph across the threshold from which she had been driven with shame. It was no wonder, therefore, that she wore an air of triumph. A powerful ally, Death, had declared himself upon her side, and at last had conquered all her foes for her; for the Blackburns—fathers, and sons, and grandsons—were all enemies in her eyes: cruel and unnatural in their treatment of her husband—insolent and cruel to herself.

She had made a hasty tour of the house before dinner, and insisted on her grand-daughter's accompanying her. The handsome sitting-rooms had been expatiated upon, and in one of them, the library, she had whispered (it was one of the few touches of pathos she exhibited throughout): 'It was here that your grandfather confessed his love for me, and gave me his first kiss. Ah,' sighed she, stepping up to the old oak-framed mirror that stood over the fireplace, 'I was as bonnie a lassie as thou, Nelly, then, and a deal healthier-looking. But rheum and wrinkles is what we must all come to.'

In the best bedroom, which had been prepared for Anthony and herself, her reflections were of a more agreeable nature: 'It was here, Nelly, that I waited on my Lady—and a kind-hearted loving creature she was, with a brute for a husband. He was a bad man every way. Alack! how I have heard him bang and swear in that dressing-room, while I have been doing madam's hair. And how she would start and colour as our faces met in this glass.'

'Did she know how you and grandfather loved one another?' asked Ellen, with an interest which she had been hitherto far from evincing in any of the circumstances of the day.

'Not at first, although she found it out before the Squire did. She tried her best to stop it—for which, indeed, I don't blame her; it is best in a general way for folks to marry in their own rank, you may depend on that, Nelly—but when she found Anthony quite set upon it, she addressed herself to me.'

'And what did she say, grandmother?'

'Well, she spoke very fair, I will say. She owned that she was much averse to her son's marrying such a one as me. "But it's better, in God's sight, that he seek to marry you," said she, "than seek your ruin." (Poor thing, she knew more than people guessed of the wickedness that went on under her own roof.) She so moved me, indeed, with her kind words, that I almost made up my mind to give Anthony up; and I would have done so—yes, I do believe I would—rather than have got him turned out of house and home for my sake. But it was not in my power to stop that. Whether I had married him or not, that would have happened all the same. He and his

father spoke such bitter words to one another; and no wonder, so far as Anthony was concerned; why, you would scarce believe it! but that wicked old man, your great-grandfather—think of *that*, Nelly, and I alive to tell it!—if he had not had a wife already, would have married me himself!'

The young girl shuddered, as well she might. These reminiscences of vicious passion, told by the lips of age concerning one far older, and whom Death had so long taken, seemed to have a smack of the charnel.

But the narrator herself had no such qualms. 'I only saw madam once after that dreadful quarrel,' she went on. 'Your grandfather and I were married then, and forbidden the house; but his mother wrote us word to meet her on a certain day in Redmoor Fir Grove, when Russell Blackburn was at York races. She looked white and thin as a ghost; and indeed she died within six months of that date; and if ever a broken heart was the cause of death, it was so with her. I thought she would never have unclosed her arms from Anthony's neck, they clung to him so at parting: he was her favourite son, as well as her eldest born, and she must have felt it was for the last time. I did not know then, as I know now, Nelly, what a bitter cup that was to drain; but I pitied her from the bottom of my heart. Besides, she had not a word of blame for me, nor even of warning; she had been such a good wife herself, that perhaps she had no idea of what some wives are; but she bade her son be true to me, even when the days should come, as they have long come, though I little thought of them at the time, when all the beauty that then gladdened him so in my face and form should have faded and gone.'

'She must have been a good woman,' sighed Ellen sympathetically.

'Yes, wench—too good for this world. Another one in her place, not so good, might have done better. She did not make the most of herself even in appearance, as I have told her, in this very chamber, many a time.—Hark! there's the first dinner-bell. The last time I heard it, and saw Anthony go down without me to take his place at table, I little thought it would be fifty years before I got my own. Well, better late than never; the tide has turned at last, though it is not at full yet; nor will be till my Willy has his rights. See, here is the girl coming to dress me; just as I used to come to madam, directly that bell rang.'

Ellen partook of none of this triumph and exhilaration. She tried to be glad, for her grandfather's sake, that their prospects had been so marvellously changed for the better; but in her heart she was sorely grieved. If the thing could have been postponed till three months later, when she would have been John Denton's wife, then she might have welcomed this stroke of good fortune like the rest, although it would have always been in an inferior degree; for she did not care for wealth for its own sake, and of the advantages it bestows she had had no experience. At present she only knew that the acquisition of it had dispelled her brightest dream. Her grandfather had sternly commanded her to break off all relations with John Denton; such an engagement, he contended, to which, even under other circumstances, he had always refused his consent, had

[May 15, 1860.]

now become utterly incompatible with her position, and was to be no longer entertained.

Not even her strong sense of gratitude and filial respect towards her grandfather could induce her to send such tidings to the young engineer; but she had written him word that for the present his visits, and even his correspondence with her, must cease. The pair were doomed to test the strength of that constancy of which each had boasted; and though she feared no danger from the separation, she deeply felt the pain of it. The fact was, now that the barren hope to which Anthony Blackburn had clung for near half a century of toil had at last begun to bear, he was greedy for the full fruition of it. He wanted to be all his ancestors the squires of Blackburn Manor had been before him, and by the help of Ellen, to whom he was sincerely and devotedly attached, even something more. He was in secret much more solicitous to secure the good opinion of his new neighbours than he pretended to be, and we have seen that he was content, for the sake of it, even to forego some taste of the pleasures of revenge. He well knew that the attempt to recover his old position in the neighbourhood would be a difficult one; that his own manners, address, and even language were not what they had been before he lost it; and that his wife would be totally unable to adapt herself to her altered fortunes. In the background, too, was a third member of the family, to whom we have not as yet been introduced, b't who could not be kept away from Blackburn Manor for ever, and who was likely to prove a still more formidable obstacle to his views.

Indeed, without Ellen's aid, the case was well nigh hopeless, and therefore it was that he threw in the scale against her love for Denton the full weight of his authority, and piled upon it all the considerations of gratitude and loyalty he could call to his aid. Without her, how could an old man (however pitiable for his misfortunes), and an old woman, whose audacity in wedlock above her station had, in their opinion, deserved all the misery it had earned, recommend themselves to the proud and well-born folk, with whom he hoped once more to mix—even putting out of consideration that more serious hindrance to his efforts which for the present he might contrive to keep out of sight? But, on the other hand, with his beautiful grand-daughter to help him, how altered was the case! A country-house that was the casket of such a jewel as Ellen Blackburn could not fail to be attractive. She had good blood in her veins, and looked and moved like a princess. She would be rich, for he would make her so. With whom, then, among untitled folk at least, might she not form an alliance? and that once cemented, her husband's kin would stand shoulder to shoulder with her own, and help them to keep their place. Thoughts of this kind had begun to fill the old man's brain from the moment that he had received the news of his nephew's death, and had even taken definite and material shape with respect to his young neighbour, Herbert Stanhope. But at all events he had quite made up his mind that the proposals of John Denton should be rejected; for let the young engineer's future prosperity be what it might in his own line, it could never be of the sort to further the family popularity. Perhaps in one who had himself sacrificed so much to mere sentiment, this resolve may seem harsh and un-

natural; but it is easier to give way to the softer emotions at eighteen than at sixty-eight, and easier at all times to disregard the sentiment of other people than one's own.

Thus it was that Ellen Blackburn found small pleasure in the sudden prosperity of her kindred, and sighed in her well-furnished chamber at the Manor for that little room in the cottage, through whose latticed window she had so often watched for her lover across the moor, and smoothed the tresses, innocent of flower or gem, to welcome him. Still, she was not unconscious of the delights of her new position, nor so plunged in grief (since she had hope to mitigate it), as not in some measure to appreciate them. The view from her present apartment (even without that beloved figure in the foreground) was not indeed to be compared with that to which she had so long been accustomed; but it had a beauty and home quiet of its own which pleased her much. Beyond the terrace and the carriage sweep, and separated from the latter only by a deep-sunk fence, lay a small but undulating and well-wooded park, with here and there a herd of deer. Upon one side was the village, with its ivied church-tower, from which the joy-bells were still pealing dreamily; and on the other, field after field of richest pasture-land, with luxuriant hedges (so different from the stone walls about Slogan), that seemed to grow so near to one another in the blue distance that they enclosed no space at all.

Her bedroom opened upon a still more charming boudoir, from whose windows, if the prospect was more restricted, it was not less fair. Immediately beneath them lay the well-kept garden, a chess-board of flowering squares of various hue. A quaint old arbour, built of firscones, and ornamented with painted glass, opened on what had once been the bowling-green, but was now in course of alteration into a croquet-ground—a change which she rightly guessed had been made by young Richard for the sake of his betrothed. Beneath the shade of those spreading cedars, and on the levelled turf, he had doubtless stood with her, and shewn how all things were to be, under her coming reign. They had paced together the winding walks of the shrubbery beyond, and climbed yonder little hill with its gay pavilion, from which all the fields and farms which owned him for their master were to be seen. The boudoir itself had been recently fitted up, and for whom but for this poor girl, of whose very name she was ignorant, but whose fate—divorced for ever from him she loved—touched her eyes with sympathetic tears. How it would vex this poor creature, when she came to hear it, that the new Squire had forbidden his people to breathe young Richard's name! That had been a bitter speech of her grandfather's, and painful to listen to; and although she did not doubt that his affection for her was genuine, though he shewed it in such mistaken fashion, it was plain wealth had already made him hard and stern; and might not his nature keep that mould for the future? She could refuse to be false to her love, but she could never act in defiance of the old man's express commandment.

It did not need, then, the cold hand of death to keep asunder John Denton and herself. But against such thoughts as these she had a simple charm, that for the present at least proved efficacious.

She drew from her bosom John's last letter, written on receipt of her harsh tidings, and which bade her be of good cheer, and to wait in hope. There was not a syllable of anger in it against her grandfather, who he frankly owned had at no time encouraged his addresses. It breathed nothing but love and trust in her ; and as she read it softly to herself, the words seemed like a song, to which the summer breeze that came in at the open window, laden with evening odours, was the fit accompaniment ; and her whole soul was lapped in comfort, and grew calm. Her toilet suffered from the use of this specific, for the second dinner-bell sounded before she had time to assume her evening attire. Her appearance, however, as has been shewn, proved sufficiently attractive in the eyes of the only guest, Mr Mowbray Moffat ; while the lack of splendour in her attire was fully compensated for by that of Mrs Blackburn, who, having had her pick of the family jewel-box, had not confined herself to mere satin and pearls.

After dinner, while the elder lady made an elaborate tour of the drawing-room, and approximately priced the furniture, the younger sat herself down at the piano and played a few sacred airs, such as she had been used to evoke from the harmonium in the little church, of which she had been organist, under Slogan ; and presently, as we have seen, this attracted the notice of the gentlemen, and brought them in from the dining-room. Wrapt in the melody, she did not notice their arrival, but continued to play on, her pensive features with a chastened glow upon them, and her eyes full of devotional fire. Even Mr Moffat, a man not given to enthusiasm of any sort, was struck with her rare and ethereal beauty, and stopped in the doorway like one spell-bound.

'She is a thorough Blackburn, is she not ?' whispered Anthony admiringly ; 'as handsome as the dead lady we have just been speaking of, and with a look besides such as the angels wear. I have sometimes feared that she would be taken from me because of that.'

'Does she inherit any delicacy of constitution ?' inquired the prosaic lawyer. 'Both her parents died very young, sir, did they not ?'

'Yes, but they were a hearty couple. The mother, a pretty girl enough, but not like this one, died in giving her birth. Her father, as strong a man as myself, came to an untimely end.'

'Yes, poor lad. He fell down some precipice in Wales, as you wrote to tell me : that mountaineering [he had been killed on Slogan by a powder-blast] which is so much the fashion now-a-days has been the death of many a fine young fellow. But though you have not mentioned him for years — your letters were so brief — this sweet young lady here is surely not your only hope — your eldest son is still alive, I trust ?'

This was the question which the lawyer had had in his mind from the first, but had not hitherto ventured to put, since it was evident that his new client had reasons for his strange reticence on so important a matter. Mr Moffat put it now with such directness, that an answer could scarcely be avoided, but kept his eyes averted from his host, and fixed on the young girl at the piano, otherwise he would have seen old Anthony's ruddy colour change to deadliest white, as he replied stiffly : 'My son William is alive, or I should not have failed to let you know, sir. At present, however, I do not

expect him home. He is abroad.—There at last she sees us !—I am afraid we startied you a little, Nelly. But pray, play on ; Mr Moffat dotes on music as much as I do.'

#### THE LAND OF THE DIAMOND.

CAPTAIN BURTON has lately given to the public the results of his exploration of the Highlands of the Brazil, and an account of his voyage down the São Francisco on a raft, a distance of fifteen hundred miles, from Sabará to the sea.\* His narrative is instructive and entertaining ; and its practical result, if his expectations are realised, will be to turn the stream of vacation-tourists in the direction of the only monarchy on the American continent, the newest empire in the world, and assuredly the most beautiful country, with the most enviable climate on the face of the earth. 'A thousand vacation-tourists will learn that yellow fever is not an abiding guest in the empire ; that her shores can be reached in ten days from Europe ; that no long sea-voyage is more comfortable or more pleasant ; that the Highlands of the Brazil, which popular ignorance figures to be a swampy flat, are exceptionally healthy, and have been used as sanitaria by invalids who had no prospect of life in Europe ; and lastly, that a short visit to Barbacena, in the province of Minas Geraes, *via* the D. Pedro Segundo RR., will offer the finest specimens of the three great geographical features of the land—the Beiramar or seaboard ; the Serra do Mar, maritime range or Eastern Ghauts ; and the Campos, commonly translated prairies.' This is an attractive programme to any mind accessible to the delights and beauties of such a revelation of nature in its most lavish grandeur ; and he afterwards adds another touch to the picture, completing its charm by his description of the Niagara of Brazil, and curtly informing us that Paulo Affonso, King of Rapids, is more accessible than Northern Scotland. 'To think of such a journey, of such scenes, of such a climate, of air, and space, and sunshine, in which mere physical life is enjoyment, is a holiday for the imagination. What a holiday for body and mind to go and do it !' And how pleasant to know that it would not cost more than one of the conventional 'trips' to semi-Anglicised continental places, in which the travelled Briton has the advantage of living very expensively among bad imitators of his social surroundings in England. From Rio to Petropolis, and thence to Juiz de Fora and Barbacena, the road, on which travelling is quite easy and well regulated, lies through scenes of incredibly varied and entrancing beauty, and leads to the grand Campos, the wonderful, fertile, sterile, flower-decked, stone-strewn, forest-laden, bare-stretching prairies of Brazil, where the pure air is laden with perfume ; where fatigue is put to rout by a strange all-pervading exhilaration ; where, though in a tropical land, the weary European recovers full vigour, and acquires such animal spirits as he never previously knew. 'There,' says Captain Burton, 'the mornings and evenings are the perfection of climate ; the nights are cool, clear, and serene as in the Arabian Desert, without its sand. Nor are the prairies deficient in the highest beauties of form and tint. There is grandeur in the vast continuous

\* *The Highlands of the Brazil.* By Captain Richard F. Burton, F.R.G.S., &c. London : Tinsley Brothers.

expanse fading into the far distance. The eye can rest upon the scene for hours, especially when viewing from an eminence, while it is checkered by the afternoon cloud, whose eclipse seems to come and go, and thus gives mobility to the aspect, as it walks over the ridged surface of the light-green or pale golden earth-waves, upheaved in the intensely blue atmosphere of morning, or in the lovely pink tints of the "afterglow," from the shadowy hollows and the tree-clumps glooming below. If we analyse the charm, its essence seems to be the instability of the ocean, when we know that there is the solidity of earth."

When the way lies no longer through the prairies, but by the cultivated lands, and through the Brazilian cities, gaudy, bright, interesting, and tenanted by good-looking, gay-hearted people, all is still beautiful. The forest-paths are glorious, the air is gemmed with hundreds of the bright birds of Brazil, rich fruits grow wild in lavish profusion, streamlets, waterfalls, lakes, adorn the scene. Through such paradisiacal scenes Captain Burton's way lay to Minas Geraes, where, according to him, the exploitation of gold and diamonds has but just commenced. In the immense resources of the Brazil, in its possession of wealth to an extent which may hereafter change the significance of the term, he is a firm believer; and he has left no detail of the working of the present system of mining, insufficient and merely inauguralatory as he believes it to be, uninvestigated. He earnestly deprecates the general opinion that Brazil is an unprofitable field for the employment of capital, and steadfastly maintains that the disasters which have given rise to the unpopularity of the empire in commercial esteem, are due to the dishonesty and incapacity of English speculators. 'Charlatanism' is the mildest term he applies to the 'promoting' manoeuvres adopted for the formation of companies, the statements, utterly irrespective of truth, the subtraction of distances, the falsification of figures, the unmitigated, shameless extortion for the comfort and accommodation of 'Mr Commissioner.' Humour is by no means a characteristic of Captain Burton's writings, but he certainly succeeds in being funny at the expense of the prospectuses. Thus he adds: 'In the mines, as in the railways of the Brazil, the fault, the cause of failure, lies at our own door, and not with the Brazilians. There has been the grossest mismanagement both at home and abroad. Private interests have been preferred to public; in certain notorious cases, a system of plunder has been organised, impossible schemes have been floated through the market, and money has been buried as though it were expected to grow.' The result is a rooted distrust of the Brazil, to the removal of which the author applies himself diligently. He has the most splendid conceivable visions respecting the future of the Brazil. He regards the gorgeous, beautiful, bountiful, tropical land as the future home of the perfect race which is to people the earth, and to supersede the necessary but unpleasant negro, and the mongrel mixed blood. It is doubtless against his will, and contrary to his intentions, that the author produces rather a pleasing impression of the 'anthropoid,' the object of his scorn and loathing, whom he holds to be a brute in a rough imitation of human shape, soulless, and ill smelling. On the head of 'the black miner,' he accumulates every possible epithet, in prose and verse, calculated to inspire disgust,

and to express ignominy, but his facts do not quite bear out his theory; for instance, in his account of the Revista, or muster of the blacks, which takes place at the Morro Velho Mine every second Sunday, he presents a pleasant picture of placid, cleanly, contented working people, and concludes thus: 'Muster over, both sexes and all ages are marched off to church. The day is then their own. The industrious will look after house and garden, pigs and poultry; they will wash and sew, or fetch water, wood, or grass, for sale. The idle and dissolute will keep the day holy in African fashion, lie in the sun, smoke, and, if they can, drink and smoke hemp, like the half-reclaimed savages of "Sá Leone." Dinah, here and elsewhere, is proverbially fond of trinkets and fine rags. Parades over, she will doff her regimental attire, and don a showy printed gown and blazing shawl, the envy of all beholders.' This is very horrible, no doubt, to Captain Burton; but we feel many of his readers will fail to perceive its peculiar atrocity, or to recognise that the separation of Sambo and Dinah from the ranks of humanity, is to be inferred from the depravity of Sambo's lying down and smoking in the sun, after a week's work underground, and Dinah's fancy for a bright-coloured gown.

The mine in which the despised negroes labour is a wonderful thing to see. Here is Captain Burton's brief description of its interior appearance, in one of the best passages he has ever written: 'And now, looking west, the huge Palace of Darkness, dim in long perspective, wears a tremendous aspect. Above us, there seemed to be a sky without an atmosphere. The walls were either black as the grave, or reflected slender rays of light, glancing from the polished watery surface, or were broken into monstrous projections, half revealing and half concealing the cavernous gloomy recesses. Despite the lamps, night pressed upon us, as it were, with a weight; and the only measure of distance was a spark here and there, glimmering like a single star. Distinctly Dantesque was the gulf between the huge mountain-sides, apparently threatening every moment to fall. Everything, even the accents of a familiar voice, seemed changed; the ear was struck by the sharp click and dull thud of the hammer upon the boring-iron, and this upon the stone; each blow invariably struck so as to keep time with the wild chant of the borer. The other definite sounds, curiously complicated by an echo, which seemed to be within reach, were the slush of water on the subterranean path, the rattling of the gold stone thrown into the kebbles, and the crash of chain and bucket. Through this Inferno, gnomes and kobolds glided about in ghostly fashion, half-naked figures muffled by the mist. Here dark bodies, gleaming with beaded heat-drops, hung by chains in what seemed frightful positions; there they swung like Leotard from place to place; there they swarmed up loose ropes like the Troglodytes; there they moved over scaffolds, which, even to look at, would make a nervous temperament dizzy. It was a place

Where thoughts were many, and where words were few.'

The capital of the mining district is Sabará, a very interesting town, situated in the midst of a Swiss landscape. (Every country seems to repeat itself in this wonderful land.) The foreground is a green flat, with a single noble tree; the river

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bends away to the right with graceful sweep, exposing the slope upon which sits the loftily placed city, whose many steeples tell the pride and piety of the old population. Sabará is a picturesque city now; when the mines are more prosperous, it will be made stately with marble and tasteful decoration. Here Captain Burton concluded his land-journey of five hundred miles, through the richest portion of the Minas Geraes, having seen nature in her most beautiful and varied forms, every mile of the road being rich in all the splendour of feature and colouring. Such forest tangle, such wondrous luxuriance of vegetation, such mighty lords of the woodlands, and infinitely varied crowding parasites, struggling and writhing upwards towards the pure perfumed air, and the glorious sun of the tropics.

At Sabará, Captain Burton began his voyage on the unknown river São Francisco, in very good spirits, though quite aware of the hardship, privation, and fatigue which lay before him, together with 'just enough risk to enliven the passage,' before he should have accomplished thirteen hundred miles, in the craziest of crafts, calked with Sabará clay. He thus describes the craft and the crew: 'The Ajójo is a bundle of three canoes, the longest occupying the centre. The canoes are lashed together by hide ropes, with an interval of six to eight inches. Round poles, fastened by leather thongs to the gunwales, support the *soalho*, or platform, which should fit tight to the sides, otherwise the craft, when "broaching to," may be waterlogged. This boarding of ten planks, laid horizontally, projects laterally into *coxias*—trampways eight to ten inches wide—where the men work. The standing awning was made fast by five wooden stanchions, of which the two pair fore and the one aft were supported, besides being nailed, by strong iron knees or stays. Facing the head, and in the coolest place, was a tall deal writing-desk, which rivalled the awning in catching the wind. Behind this, on each side, stood a *girado*, or boarded bunk, for sofa and bed, raised on four uprights. Amidships, was the table, a locked box of provisions, and two stools. In the stern stood the galley, a similar bench lined with brick, the *batterie de cuisine*, not forgetting the invaluable frying-pan. Two large jars of porous earth carried the supply of water. My crew numbers three—old Veira and his sons. My sole attendant is a Morro Velho boy, named "Agostinho," lent me by the superintendent. He knows something of the river, of gold-washing, of diamond-digging, and of rough cookery. Negra, the mastiff, wild-eyed as an ounce, is the terror of those who see her for the first time, and will prove useful—in these parts, all men travel with fierce dogs.'

With this queer equipment, Captain Burton set sail, no doubt forming a complete puzzle to his crew, and to every human being with whom he subsequently came in contact. Down the beautiful varying river he floated, sometimes easily, sometimes with infinite difficulty, by cultivated lands, growing sugar-cane and coffee; by rich banks of flowers and orange-groves; by splendid sweeps of forest; by swampy plains, where water-fowl and the river-pig abounded; by many a beautiful tarn and fierce rapid, and day by day approached the home of the diamond. Through all the wildness and the desolateness, the traveller's mind was busy with what is to be, when the desert stream shall have

become a highway of nations, an artery supplying the lifeblood of commerce to the world. The sandbank where he lay and took in the silent magnificence of the scene may be the landing-place of a wealthy town. The 'Ounce Rapid' and the 'Fierce Sandbar' will be silenced for ever; 'and,' says the author, 'the busy hum of man in time will deaden the only sounds which now fall upon our ears, the baying of the Guára wolf, and the tiny bark of the little brown bush-rabbit.' So, to Diamantina, where the whole population lives on the diamond mines, as that of Sabará lives on the Morro Velho; and to the Jequitinhonha Diamond Diggings.

As Brazil has borrowed her gold-mining through Portugal from the Romans, so she has taken her system of diamond-washing from Hindustan. The process is very laborious, and highly interesting in its material aspect; how suggestive to the imagination need hardly be mentioned. The mind runs in a moment over a wide range of fancy, fiction, and fact—from Sindbad the Sailor to Mr Harry Emanuel. One thinks of all the beautiful historic baubles, and the misery and guilt they have caused; of all the fairy tales in which diamonds have figured; of all the strange stories of theft of them, and its discovery and cruel punishment. Tavernier's pretty story of the young jewel-purchasers of Hindustan, and their grave organisation, recurs to the memory when Captain Burton tells how children are employed in the Diamond Diggings. Their sphere is the *lavagem*, or washing. Their keen bright eyes detect the lurking treasure when older optics fail; even at twenty-five years, there are few which can be trusted to let no crystal prize escape amid the gravel. The simple expedient of the magnifying-glass is not yet in use, and the toil of the sifter is laborious and slow. It is during the lavagem that robberies are generally effected. 'Few,' says Captain Burton, 'swallow the diamond, not because it is considered poisonous, as by the Hindu, but on account of the difficulty of doing so unobserved. In India, the miner jerked the stone into his mouth, or stuck it in the corner of his eye; twelve to fifteen overseers were required per gang of fifty light-fingered men. The civilised thief pretends to be short-sighted, and picks up the plunder with his tongue-tip. A favourite way is to start as if frightened by a snake, and thus to distract the attention of the superintendent, who, if "clever," is wide awake to the trick. Most of the stones disappear by being tilted or thrown over the top of the pan during the washing, and are picked up at leisure. They are easily sold to the huckster, the pedler, or the keeper of the nearest grogillery. Thus may be explained the number of slaves who have purchased their liberty, and taken to the bush. Even the white man has owned that his first impulse is always to secrete the diamond.' The diamond-bearing hills are singularly barren, the least beautiful portion of beautiful Brazil. Captain Burton tells some new diamond stories, but we feel that the diamond wants a Sir Emerson Tennent to do it the same justice as that which has been meted to the elephant. Of the unrivalled *Estrella do Sul*, which every one remembers at the International Exhibition, he says: 'This superb brilliant was found in July 1853, at Bagagem of Minas Geraes, by a negress. In the rough state it weighed 254½ carats. The owner parted with it for thirty contos (L.3000); at the Bank of Rio de

Janeiro it was presently deposited for 200 to 305 contos, when it was worth £200,000 to £300,000. After being cut by the proprietors, Messrs Coster of Amsterdam, it was reduced to 125 carats; and now it belongs, I believe, to the Pasha of Egypt. Though not perfectly pure and white, its "fire" renders it one of the finest gems extant. This diamond has one exceptional circumstance attaching to its history—it has caused no bloodshed; not even the finder was murdered. She was only deceived and ruined, and died broken-hearted. This was the negress who brought the gem to her inhuman master, hoping for her freedom; but he took the jewel, and kept the slave! How comes Captain Burton to concede the possibility of an 'anthropoid' having a heart which could be, and was, broken? Is there anywhere, in any palace in the world, a band of jewels on any stately neck, a star in any shining hair, a flashing gem on any slender hand, but has blood-drops or tear-drops upon it, and the curse of tortured, vengeful hearts?

As yet the Diamantine formations of the Brazil have been barely scratched, and the works have been compared with those of beavers. The rivers have not been turned, the deep pools above and below the rapids, where the great deposits must collect, have not been explored; the dry method of extraction, known long ago in Hindustan, is still unknown here. 'The next generation will work with thousands of arms, directed by men whose experience in mechanism and hydraulics will enable them to economise labour; and it is to be hoped that the virgin gem-bearing waters will be washed up-stream.' This was the sensible provision of the old Diamantine Regulation. Unfortunately, it came too late, when the channels had been choked with rubbish that was hardly worth removing.'

After a close inspection of the Diamantine district, Captain Burton resumed his adventurous voyage, and his close observation of nature, which became increasingly beautiful. The banks of the great river are rich in magnificent sugar-cane, and on both sides offered the most tempting inducements to emigration, while the climate is superb. At Coroa do Gallo, the author says: 'To-day we passed over immense wealth. The Rio Pardo, like the Paraná, drains highlands rich in diamonds and gold, whilst the bed of the Rio das Velhas is a natural system of launders.' Here the splendid Buriti palm grows in great luxuriance. No weariness could come to the voyager amid such scenes, under such a sky, breathing such air, and nearing with every day the King of the Rapids, which he reached in safety at last. Niagara is always the same; Paulo Affonso varies, but is ever sublime, ever awful. 'The general effect of the picture,' says the author—and the same may be said of all great cataracts—is the "realised" idea of power, of power tremendous, inexorable, irresistible. The eye is spell-bound by the contrast of this impetuous motion, this wrathful, maddened haste to escape, with the frail steadfastness of the bits of rainbow hovering above; with the "Table Rock," so solid to the tread, and with the placid settled stillness of the plain and the hillocks, whose eternal homes seem to be here. The fancy is electrified by the aspect of this Durga of nature, this evil working good, this life in death, this creation and construction by destruction.' The age of the King of Rapids is estimated to be 2400 years.

In the presence of this mighty phenomenon of nature, Captain Burton concludes the story of his latest feat of travel, one which is no less remarkable for its wonderful interest, than for the ease of its accomplishment. His admiration of these western lands is deep and enthusiastic, his belief in the splendour of their future destiny fixed. He says: 'They are emphatically the Lands of Promise, the "expression of the Infinite," and the scenes where the dead Past shall be buried in the presence of that nobler state, to which we must now look in the far future.'

#### A REVOLUTIONISED TRADE.

It has often been a subject of wonder to me, that no one of that really unfortunate body, the London cowkeepers and dairymen, have ever come forward to describe some of the trials which have so completely changed their trade, and to a great extent injured or absolutely ruined nearly all its followers. This has all been done within the experience of men still pursuing the calling; and many of my readers must remember the 'murrain' of 1841 and the subsequent year, which was as terrible to cattle as the devastating 'plague' of two or three years back, only its area was narrower, and it was chiefly confined to milch cows. What the technical name of this disorder was, I do not know, nor, most assuredly, do the majority of the dairymen themselves; who call it indifferently the 'rinderpest' and the 'foot-and-lung disease'; the swiftness of its progress, however, combined with the unknown cause of its rise and contagion, and the impossibility of curing it, combined to produce a mysterious scourge, which seemed sent on purpose to ruin the wretched proprietors. Nothing like it had ever been seen before, at least not in the memory of recent generations: what the old murrains were could only be guessed, but the worst were probably not more fatal or irresistible than this.

From this great evil arose one still greater for the time; a general prejudice against milk prevailed, and while its consumption was diminished in nearly every household, it was in many entirely discontinued. At first, this was wholly from the dread of some infectious property being imparted to the milk, which, it was naturally enough argued, might, even unknown to the dairyman, be drawn from cows in which the disease was fermenting; but to this dislike soon became added others of a far less rational character; and for years, almost ever since indeed, the most absurd assertions respecting the adulteration of milk have found ready and general credence. Twenty years ago, the statement was gravely made, and repeated in almost every newspaper in the kingdom, that to thicken and whiten the milk, weakened almost to transparency, a mucilage of dog's brains was commonly employed. The utter impossibility of dissolving the brains of a dog or any other animal in milk, and there holding them in complete suspension, had no effect whatever in checking the general belief. The mildest form of adulteration allowed by public opinion was the adding of chalk to the watered milk. Now, this is just as impossible as the other; and if any reader believes that chalk is put into milk, let him grate a knob into his next pint of milk, and see how he can prevent it from shewing itself.

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is drawn from the cow, few persons believe: it is not so sold. The deterioration which it suffers occurs in two ways—one is taking the cream from it; this of course impoverishes the milk; but when it is intended to sell it as 'new milk,' much less cream is taken than when skim-milk is to be the residue. The other mode, as no one will be surprised to learn, is by the addition of water. Nearly all the milk sold in London is watered, 'washed' or 'bobbed,' to use the dialect of the trade; but I am quite sure that no other adulteration whatever is at all extensively practised. Spanish annota, it is true, is occasionally used, but only in very small quantities. The object of this is to give a richer colour to the milk or cream; partly because a colour unnaturally high is looked for and admired by the customers, and partly because the 'washing' gives a bluish cast to the milk, especially to the margin when the vessel holding it is tilted; added water can generally be thus detected. One very curious fact, however, must be borne in mind—the milk from a black cow is bluer than that of any other cow. The reader may perhaps smile incredulously at reading this, but it is true nevertheless, and can no more be accounted for than the equally puzzling fact, that all white cats are deaf.

By no means, however, could the dairyman make his trade a profitable one during the murrain, nor has it ever since been so good as of old, for the price of milk, oddly enough, does not seem to vary like other commodities, but remains the same whether cows sicken or thrive, rise or fall in cost. No practicable advance, however, would have met and sufficed for the emergency in which the trade found themselves placed; and a single illustration will shew this. At that time, cows were not nearly so dear as they are now; and I remember a cow-keeper buying, on the Monday, three very fine healthy cows for fifty-seven pounds; but so swift, as before remarked, was the progress of this disease, that these identical animals were sold on the following Friday for six pounds, being, excepting as offal, worthless. There was one West-end dairyman who had a 'staff,' as one may say, of thirty-two cows; that was the number usually in his shed; and some idea of the virulence with which the murrain raged may be formed from the fact that he, in six months only, lost thirty-seven cows from that stock and its renewals. There was no fault in his shed, which was warm, roomy, and dry, and was, strange to say, in the second plague, almost the only one I knew in London which entirely escaped its ravages. The owner never lost a cow all through the recent cattle-plague, so capricious and so baffling have been these scourges.

The first murrain, although subdued, yet seems never to have wholly disappeared, and a few cases occurring now and then kept up the memory of the foot-and-lung disease; its chief commercial effect had been to induce some of the trade to look to the country for their supply, instead of depending entirely upon their own cows. Now that this has become rather the rule than the exception, we wonder to read that great dislike and prejudice existed in the customers to this course, and that the country milk-trade was left in the hands of the lower dealers. The public, in short, seemed to think there was the same difference between a dairyman who sold milk from his own cows and the one who imported it, as there is between the

boot-seller who makes his articles at home and his rival who has them all from Northampton. Squabbles, amusing to the looker-on, would often arise between the regular vendor and those who sold the disliked railway milk. A certain eminent nobleman was reported at that time to be labouring under a cutaneous affection, for which immersion in milk was the only palliative, and I have heard the orthodox milkmen exasperate their rivals by taunts relative to the latter having to wait until the 'duke had come out of his bath' before they could go their rounds.

It soon began to be evident that the carriage of milk by railway was destined to grow more important almost day by day; for, while the price of the article remained unchanged, the purchase-money of the cow had increased fully one-third, and the cost of her keep had risen in a very much higher proportion. A first-rate cow still yielded a profit, but then they were not all first-rate cows; one really deserving the name would yield, perhaps, fourteen or sixteen quarts of milk per day; a few rare animals have given twenty quarts, but the average may be taken from ten to fourteen. The trade do not keep a cow if she does not give at least six quarts per day. They usually give a good supply of milk for ten months, but some have been known to continue in full milk for more than two years; a cow has yielded for three years, but this is extremely rare. The little Brittany cows, which have become rather popular of late, do not furnish more than four quarts a day, and are only kept for pleasure, not profit.

In London, at anyrate, the cost of keeping cows depends chiefly on the price of grains, the demand for which, even now, is almost in excess of the large quantities produced by the metropolitan breweries and distilleries. This would naturally make them dear, but would not account for a most remarkable and sudden advance which took place in their price a few years back. The price of grains at the time of which I speak was about one shilling per quarter, but they quickly rose to two shillings, and then all at once became very dear—so suddenly, that a dealer, buying grains on the Monday, gave two shillings per quarter, and on the following Saturday, the same quantity cost the same man six shillings. They are now about eight shillings per quarter, and as they form the staple of food for cows in London, this advance is a very serious one. A cow will eat about a quarter of distillers', or a quarter and a fourth of brewers' grains weekly; this difference arises from the quarter of the one trade containing eight bushels, of the other only six bushels. They are considered equally nourishing, and when judiciously changed with other food, conduce more than anything else to increase the supply of milk. Several dry seasons in succession had caused hay to be dear beyond all precedent, and probably this had a great deal to do with the almost fabulous price to which grains advanced, because, as is well known, the production of these depends on an entirely different trade, and cannot be governed by any fluctuations in the milk business, so an extra demand will no doubt increase their price rapidly.

At anyrate, there was another blow struck at the trade, and gradually the better shops began to draw their supplies from the country. The causes

alluded to were still in operation, when, all at once, came the terrific 'rinderpest,' and scores of sheds were cleared at once and entirely of their stock : what the disease passed over, the alarmed and often inexperienced inspectors would condemn, until it seemed as if there were about to be put a complete and final period to the trade of cow-keeper. This last catastrophe decided the matter ; and, as we now see, there has sprung up on all our railways an important milk-carrying trade, which gives every promise of its becoming larger year by year ; thus knocking away about the last item in which London was self-supplying, and rendering it still more dependent on the provinces. The change will do some good to the trade if it only emancipates them from the tyranny of the servants of their patrons ; all tradesmen have to fee and court these people, but none of any calling are so thoroughly at their mercy as the milk-seller. If he fail to propitiate the housekeeper, cook, or whoever is the presiding genius, in vain is all his struggling to retain the custom. I have known a nobleman give an audience to his milkman, who wished to know why he was going to lose a customer he had served for years, and he shewed to the earl very plainly that he was suffering from the spite of an upper servant ; so a continuance of the patronage was promised him. But the nobleman had overrated his power in his own house. Seldom, from that day, did the cream prove rich, or the milk for the nursery good, which the cow-keeper sent in. He exculpated himself over and over again ; but at last the head of the department, whoever it was, grew tired of the complaints, and changed the tradesman. The good-natured earl saw the dairyman again, and assured him he was very sorry for the change, but that he really could not help himself.

So the milk-trade of London is revolutionised, and has passed into a totally different phase from that which it wore a generation back. On the whole, the change is for the better, because the quarter whence we now draw our supplies is inexhaustible, while the productive power of the London dairies grew smaller every year. Nevertheless, they had their advantages in some respects over the present plan ; be the tradesman ever so honest, he cannot now insure the absolute purity of his milk, nor can a drop of new milk be drawn for the invalid at any time, as before could be done. Other points might be cited ; but we may be content with knowing that, on the whole, the change is an improvement.

#### FROM THE RANK.

'WHAT was the queerest thing as ever happened to me since I ha' been on the rank ? Well, there has been a many queer things, and one a most terrible one. We Four-wheelers sees a deal of life ; much more than them 'Ansom chaps does, notwithstanding the little hole in the roof through which they looks down upon parties when parties isn't aware. They drives fast and fast folks, and some has an idea that it is only fast life as is Life ; but you knows better, sir, I daresay.'

I was taking a long street-drive upon the box-seat of a 'growler,' with my family in the interior, bound for a distant railway station, and I had put a certain question to my cabman, in hopes that his answer might make the journey less tedious.

He was a young fellow, smartly dressed, and drove a horse so unusually quick-paced that I felt quite a scruple of conscience in not inquiring into his merits. But then I had asked a cabman about his horse before, and the consequences had been most disastrous ; as bad as asking a High Church clergyman about his Chancery, or a valetudinarian about his complaints ; there had been no end to the subject at all : and now I congratulated myself upon my reticence, for a cabman's long-windedness is in inverse proportion to that of his steed, and since, when my inquiry had only been directed to human affairs, my Jeju shewed such signs of verbosity, what would he not have been (thought I) upon the subject of horse-flesh ?

'What was the queerest thing as ever happened to me as a kebman ? Well, perhaps this un was ; or, at all events, I remembers it best, because it happened only last week. O my ! yes, it was a rummy go !' And with that, my friend was so tickled with the recollection, that he rolled on his seat till I thought he would have rolled off it, while the reins so shook in his hand, that the speedy horse, who took it for a sign that he was 'called upon,' started off at score, and missed only by an inch or two making himself a passenger in a *Citizen* bus that chanced to be before us with its door open. This formed, of course, the introduction to an exchange of repartees between the cab and my impulsive companion, in which the latter had decidedly the better of it ; and then, to my great relief (for I had come in for my share of epithets), we shot into a by-street, more suitable to the composition and appreciation of narrative.

'It was down by Cavendish Square that I took her up—a well-looking woman of nine-and-twenty or thereabouts, and a perfec' lady. Not only well dressed, but well mannered and affable, which is what I goes by, more than all the fine feathers as a bird can wear. "Kebman," says she, "drive me to the nearest chemist;" and I druv her accordingly.

'But she did not get what she wanted at that shop, for she says : "Drive me to another chemist." And I druv her. I should think we went to a matter of fifteen chemists, and yet she couldn't get what she was in search of. That, I began to think, was a little queer, because chemists mostly has things one wants—spirits, or what does as well, for instance, on a wet Sunday, when the publics is closed—besides, everything as one can possibly not want, in them green and blue bottles So, says I, seeing her look a'most as blue as they : "What is it you do want, mem ?"

"Want ?" said she, in a slow, absent sort of way, which made me somehow get it into my head (and it's there still) that what she did want, poor soul, was Pison, "well, I want to go into the country."

"Country !" says I, quite cheerful : "you have got into the keb with the right horse for that, mem. He can go a stretcher, he can. Where do yer wish to go to ?"

"I want," says she, speaking just like one in a dream, "I want to go to Bath."

"Now Bath was rather a long order, even for my nag here, and I told her so.

"Very good," says she. "Drive me to another chemist."

"Then, as it didn't seem of any consequence to herself where she was druv, I took her up Maida

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'Ill way (where my stable is), and tried a chemist or two in those parts ; but none of them had got the thing she wanted any more than the others ; and she looked more concerned and vexed than ever. She was such a perfec' lady to look at, and so affable, that I felt pity for her ; and though it was not to my advantage, I said, says I : "If you really do want to go to Bath, I had better drive you to the Great Western Railway, where you can take the train."

"Ah," says she, with a sort of a shrink, as though somebody had struck at her, "but isn't that Paddington Station?"

"Well, mem," says I, "I will not deceive you, it certainly is."

"You are a good man," says she. "I wish everybody was like you" (which was very kind of her, I'm sure) ; "but I can't go to Paddington Station, because my husband is there waiting for me."

"Well, for all I know, this might be a very good reason ; I know many a good woman—Ansom kebmen's wives—as avoids Paddington Station on that account, and small blame to them. So, since the chemists couldn't suit her, I offers her an alternative of my own."

"Alternative," said I involuntarily.

"Very likely, sir ; only I always calls it alternative," replied my Jehu coldly. I had offended him by my foolish particularity, and it cost me a fourpenny cigar out of my case to re-establish his good-humour.

"Well," continued he, puffing slowly, and speaking with greater deliberation than ever, "'If I can't take you to Bath,' says I, 'I can take you somewhere on the way—say Windsor."

"How much would that be?" says she, taking out her purse.

"We couldn't do it, speaking for horse and man, under two pund, mem, and there's not another horse on our rank as could do it at all."

"Two pund is a large sum," says she.

"Well," says I, "say Ealing. I will take you to Ealing Station, mem, for twelve-and-six, including all these chemists"—and indeed I had got off and on my box, for a matter of forty times, by this; so I don't think it was unreasonable. I would not have been hard upon that 'ere fare, if it was ever so, partly because of the p'ison as I had in my mind, and partly because she was such a perfec' lady.

"You may drive me to Ealing Station, then," says she, in a sort of despairing voice ; and I druv her. The train to Bath was not due for an hour or so, and she wanted to try the chemists at Ealing ; but that I wouldn't have nothing to do with. A country chemist might have given the poor thing what I am sadly afraid she wanted, and I wasn't going to have anything happen in my keb, if I knew it—out at Ealing.

"No," says I, "mem, asking your pardon, but no more physic-shops for me. If you would take my advice, you would let me drive you to a public-house, for a drop of somethink better than physic, and of which I am sure you stands in need."

"As you please," says she, "kebman," in such a soft and miserable voice as went to my heart ; just as though she did not care where she was druv to, if it couldn't be out of the world. So I pulled up at a public, and gave her some bread and cheese—good Wiltshire it was, and yet she took no more than a mouse might nibble, and a little sup of porter,

which she drank as though it was black dose, sitting all the while in the keb ; while I made a goodish meal, I promise you. Then we went back to the station, and she gave me her purse to get her ticket—first-class—to Bath for her, "for," says she, "I can trust you with untold gold" (which was also very kind of her, and I hope the truth). Then I gives her the ticket and her purse. "And will you stay here in the keb," says I, "or wait upon the platform, mem?"

"I will stay in the keb, thank you," says she ; and upon my life, sir, I do believe it was because I had been tolerably kind to her, and she did not like to part company with me before she was obliged. She had had "hard lines" in the world, and been very badly treated by some one or another, you may take your davey : poor soul.

"I did not like to trouble her with such a matter, but as the time was getting very short, I says : "Please, mem, you have forgot to give me the twelve-and-six :" for as for the bread and cheese and porter that she had paid for on the spot.

"O dear, I am so sorry," says she : "I fancied you would have paid yourself when I gave you the purse."

"No, mem," says I. "I should never have thought of taking any such a liberty."

"Then she paid me, saying with a sad smile : "I am afraid I have been very troublesome," and wished me "good-day." And then the station-bell rang.

"I had the curiosity to peep through the door when the train came in, and watch her. She ran down the platform looking earnestly into every individual carriage, and would have been left behind altogether, but for the guard who opened the door, and popped her in at the very last moment. I was sorry to leave her, for I never took a fare who was a more perfec' lady ; but I was somehow glad, too, to get her out of my keb. There was somethink very queer about her, that you may depend : and if she were mad (which, however, I don't think as she was), she must ha' been druv and druv, by some wus-hearted chap than me, until she was druv out of her wits.

"Perhaps he is sorry for what he has done by this time, says I to myself, and this here party will be advertised, and I took great count of her dress and appearance, in case she should. But, curiously enough, nothing came of it all ; and yet, even as it stands, it seems to me one of the queerest starts as ever I came across since I ha' been on the rank."

"It was undoubtedly very queer," said I. "But you hinted something, my friend, of a certain terrible adventure that had once happened to you ; I should like to hear that too, please."

"Why, this is what I call reg'lar sucking a cove's brains," responded my cabman, looking up at me with a cunning leer. "If I did not see as you was a family man, with luggage and that, I should be a'most inclined to believe as you was some literary carakter. There's a many on 'em about ; Maida 'll way ; only, when they rides at all, they takes a 'Ansom."

Remembering what Mr Pickwick had suffered at a cabman's hands, from using a notebook, I hastened to clear my character from this imputation, and to assure my companion that I had no other idea in questioning him beyond that of increasing my knowledge of human nature, for observing which

he must have had so many and exceptional opportunities:

'Well, that's true,' said he, greatly mollified. 'Considering the various parties as uses four-wheels, I know of nobody (except perhaps some as keep a public) who is so likely to know a thing or two as one of us. Deary me; the games as has been a going on in this here very keb!'

'Games?' said I. 'What games can people play in a cab?'

'Why, bless yer, lots of games. I don't mean cards and that—though I have known 'em play cards, with my 'ind cushion on their laps for a table—but all sorts of schemes and devices, played by all classes of folks. I have druv marquishes, and I have druv parties as you would not have thought could ever stand a shillin' fare. I have druv the perlice, and I have druv thieves. I don't care who it is, so long as they don't want to be druv to the Fever 'Ospital.'

'Was the horrible case you spoke of a case of infection?' inquired I.

'No: it was a deuced sight worse than that, sir. It was summat as sends a cold chill to my marrer, whenever I thinks about it. And yet it began so cheerful. Just after I first began to be a kebman, I was 'ailed in the Kilburn Road by a couple of fares: two middle-aged comfortable ladies, small tradesmen's widows, as I should set 'em down as, and they asked me how much it was to Blackfriars. "Half-a-crown," says I.

"Werry good, young man," says the fattest of 'em: "then drive away, and just stop at the first public-house, will ye?"

'Well, I pulled up, willing enough, at the first public, and they gave me a shilling, and had some gin and beer, and "Never mind the change, young man," says the fattest; "but drive along sharp, and stop at the next public-house."

'Well, between Kilburn and Blackfriars, I should think they stopped at a matter of four-and-twenty public-houses. The lady with the chemists was nothing to them; moreover, unlike her, they never failed to get what they wanted at each, until they had took a great deal more than was good for them, and I must say as they had made me a little "fresh" myself. And every time it was: "You may keep the change, young man;" so that I had at last more than five-and-twenty shillings of it (mostly in coppers). This is all werry nice, thought I, as long as it lasts; but sooner or later these here parties will be a dozing off, and expect me to see 'em home, which maybe will be the perlice station, for they had not told me their address yet, but only Blackfriars. They must ha' been very much accustomed to strong liquors, for unless it was sobbin' and cryin' a bit, which the one as was not the fattest did continual, they shewed no signs of bein' overcome. What a middle-aged female of the respectable class can take, and yet sit in a keb, is only known to us drivers; but these two, they beat all as ever I see. Well, at Blackfriars, they gave their address at last. It was a queer little street, but very respectable-looking, and I druv 'em up to their house, which I noticed had all the blinds down. They got out without much help; and the one as was not the fattest, she speaks to me for the first time, and says: "Young man," says she, "you have druv us well and safe, and over and above your fare, you shall see my dear daughter."

"Well," thought I, "here is a queer start. This stout party has taken such a fancy to Dick Braddle (which was me), that she wants him to become her son-in-law;" and I larfed aloud.

"Don't larf," said she, quite solemn like, and pointing to the drawn-down blinds; "but come in." Well, I went in. Not into the parlour, as I expected, but up-stairs, the two ladies leading the way. At the first-floor, I stopped. I did not like it—the house was so dark and still; but then, thinks I: "Lor, I'm only a poor kebman, and it's their own money I've got in my pocket after all. Why should they want to rob me?" So I went on, into the second-floor front, which was a sittin'-room. Here the old lady as was not the fattest began to moan and cry, and, pointing to the sofa, on which lay somethin' covered with a sheet, she says: "There is my poor daughter."

"And the other one, she turned the sheet back a little, and there was the face of a dead young lady, very white and quiet, but looking to me, as had never seen any one dead before, most awful. Coming, as it did, so sudden and unexpected, and just after I had been larfing down below, it gave me, I do assure you, an uncommon turn."

"Indeed, I can quite believe it, Mr Braddle," said I, "if the thing happened as you state: but did it really happen?"

"As true as I sit here, sir. Why, who would ever have invented such a story?"

"Then, what is your explanation of the two women's conduct?"

"That ain't my business, sir. My business was only to drive 'em; and you may be sure I did not stop a minit more in that ere house to ask any questions. It is, however, my opinion that the old lady as was not the fattest was really the poor girl's mother, and that sorrow had made her take to drink for comfort: and as for the other, she was glad enough to sympathise with her friend so far as drinking the liquor went. But, at the time, it seemed to me a most terrible Start, I do assure you. It's the worst thing as has ever happened to me yet, since I ha' been on the rank; and I wouldn't have it happen again for twice twenty-five shillings.—Here's the station, sir; and see, you've got fifteen minits to spare, all along of my good horse, which I hope you will take into account in the fare, according."

#### LITTLE MAY.

On! empty is her little bed!  
And useless stands my darling's chair.  
That sunny face, that golden head,  
Shall never more rest there!

Oh! silent is the little room  
Where once her childish voice was heard;  
No sunlight ever breaks the gloom;  
The blinds are never stirred.

Her toys with dust are covered o'er;  
Her little books unopened lie.  
Her merry laugh will sound no more  
In joyous melody;

For little May, fair as the light,  
Fresh as the flowers that bloom and die,  
Is singing with the angels bright,  
In lands beyond the sky.